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**“Find What You’re Looking For...” At the 2006 Montana Governor’s Conference on
Tourism & Recreation**

Helena, MT – February 14, 2006 – Interested in travel trends for Montana as well as the region? Is community and cultural tourism development your desire? Asking how to get the most from your marketing budget? Looking for Montana-made products and foods to sell visitors? If these questions are yours or your interest focuses on strengthening Montana through tourism and recreation, then register for the April 10-11 “Find What You’re Looking For In Montana” Governor’s Conference on Tourism & Recreation at Great Falls’ Best Western Heritage Inn.

Governor Brian Schweitzer notes that 2006 is the first time in 32 years of gathering that the statewide tourism and recreation conference is in Great Falls. The Governor invites Montanans to “celebrate with our Great Falls partners the important role tourism and recreation plays in the Montana way of life and the benefits it brings our economy.” Governor Schweitzer will address the conference attendees at the April 11 luncheon.

Conference registration, agenda, special events and Great Falls area lodging information are available at <http://travelmontana.mt.gov/conference> or by contacting the Montana Department of Commerce Travel Montana program, 841-2870, vbjornberg@mt.gov.

Three national tourism experts will open the conference’s morning sessions. On April 10, Ed Barlow, President of Creating the Future, Inc., looks to Montana’s future with his presentation: Creating a Competitive Economic Advantage Through Tourism. Later that morning, noted western states tourism development and planning expert Dr. Emilyn Sheffield, California State University Department of Recreation Management, presents “National & Regional Travel & Demographic Trends: Implications for Montana Tourism.” On April 11, Destination Development, Inc., CEO Roger Brooks opens the day’s agenda with an interactive, multi-media presentation based on his book “The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism.”

Governor Brian Schweitzer will address the conference at Tuesday’s luncheon.

Following the feature presentations each day, the conference agenda offers a series of concurrent learning sessions covering a variety of topics, including:

- Getting Maximum Return For Your Marketing Dollars

- Montana Travel Industry – The Latest Facts & Figures (2005 Montana Visitor Trends and Profiles)
- The Creative Arts: Four Steps to Cultural Tourism
- Responding Profitably to Travel & Demographic Trends
- Customer-Centered Salesmanship (New material from Montana Superhost)
- ‘Montana Tribal Tourism Alliance 2006 & Beyond’ Strategic Plan
- 2006 Lewis & Clark Events
- Putting Montana on Your Table/Shelf
- Going-to-the-Sun Road and Beartooth Highway Updates
- Japan, China and European Markets
- Montana Trails Showcase

On Tuesday afternoon, April 11, local coordinators are offering five field trips that conference attendees can pre-register for. The field trips highlight a number of area attractions and are led by local guides. The field trip offerings include:

- Relive-Play-Create-Explore: Great Falls Museums Tour – guides show off the High Plains Heritage Center, Children’s Museum of Montana, Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art and the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center.
- THE Great Falls of the Missouri & Rivers Edge Trail Tour – visits Ryan Dam and the Great Falls and experiences a float trip along the River’s Edge Trail.
- Exploring Ulm Pishkun State Park – hiking, Native American presentation and the visitor center are featured.
- Historic Fort Benton Tour – highlights the attractions of Montana’s oldest Missouri River town.
- Great Falls Trolley Historic Tours – provides the “Big Picture” overview of the Great Falls story.

The conference concludes Tuesday night with a banquet and statewide tourism award presentations.

Tourism and recreation is a leading Montana industry serving 10 million non-residents visitors and many Montanans in 2005. The non-resident visitors spent approximately \$2 billion in 2005, helping support 29,000 Montana jobs and generating over \$531 million in income.

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